

IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday, 14 June 2022

Present:- Councillors Pitchley (Chair), Cooksey, Aveyard, Bennett-Sylvester, Z. Collingham, Griffin, Haleem, Hughes, Jones, McNeely, Mills and Thompson.

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, Atkin, Bacon, Elliott, and from co-optee Joanna Jones.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at <https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 3 MAY 2022

Resolved:-

1. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 3 May 2022 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair advised that there were no items of business on the agenda that would require the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or press.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

The Improving Lives Select Commission offered their thanks for the support provided by Martin Elliott, Governance Advisor, who had now left the authority.

6. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - UPDATE

The Chair explained that the Corporate Parenting Panel had not yet met. An update would be provided when available.

7. ANNUAL REPORT ON CHILD EXPLOITATION

The Chair offered her thanks to Laura Gough, Head of Service Safeguarding Quality and Learning, for providing such a well written report.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services introduced the report explaining that it had been requested to understand the trends and performance regarding Child Exploitation and the mitigations in place. She introduced Laura Gough, Head of Service Safeguarding Quality and Learning, Simon Blakemore, South Yorkshire Police, Sam Barstow, Acting Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene, and Rebecca Wall, Interim Assistant Director for Children's Social Care.

The report provided a summary of the key activity that had taken place including performance information and trends, awareness raising and safeguarding for the year 2021/22.

The presentation received provided information on the national strategy, Rotherham's local strategy, how they respond to child exploitation, how they worked together as partners along with the specialist services provided and post abuse support. The report recommended that the activity undertaken was noted.

The Head of Service Safeguarding Quality and Learning and colleagues made a presentation to the meeting that included information on:

- The National Strategy – Tackling Child Sexual Abuse, listing its three key objectives.
- Rotherham's Child Exploitation Strategy 2019/22.
- Highlighting the response to Child Exploitation, including referrals to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the specialist multi-agency team EVOLVE and the direct work with Children and Young People.
- Several multi-agency intelligence meetings were held with different areas of focus. One was the Child Exploitation Tactical Group (CETG), another was the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) and the multi-agency operational Missing. It was clarified that multiple partners were involved in all these meetings ensuring that the right personnel were attending the right meeting.
- The intelligence meetings ensured that intervention could be managed and planned more effectively.
- Three service providers had been commissioned to provide post abuse services to victims and survivors to reduce waiting times.
- A large number of awareness raising, and training sessions had been held with good attendance.
- The 'Spot the Signs' campaign was highlighted. Promotion for this would continue.
- Operation Keepsake was a multi-agency initiative which had engaged with over 1600 children within the community between April 2021 and March 2022.
- The training and support provided by EVOLVE was highlighted.
- The aims of the victim/survivor engagement project was to better understand how they felt in order to provide better assistance.

- Overall, there were a lot of good initiatives being undertaken within Rotherham that was leading to an effective and robust provision. There was always room for improvement and a need to react to an ever-changing landscape however a solid foundation had been created to be built upon.

Members felt that the report was very informative. Regarding the multi-agency missing group clarification was sought if all schools had the contact details for that service. It was confirmed that all schools had a dedicated safeguarding leads and deputies. A lot of work had been carried out with schools regarding the importance of raising instances of children missing education.

The report mentioned that Rotherham was one of a small number of local authorities to retain a small multi-agency team, it was queried what the advantages of having such a team would be. Rotherham had a greater understanding of how powerful the multi-agency team was in terms of providing a greater level of support and engagement. Their view was that Rotherham should be leaders in best practice and are now providing advice and guidance to others on our practices and processes.

It was noted that 213 children received 470 assessments, does that number give rise to any concerns that things may have been missed during the original assessments. It was clarified that children undergo a number of assessments as they move through the process to identify how the risk reduces and enable support to be tailored to their requirements.

In terms of regional and national co-operation regarding child exploitation, it was clarified that South Yorkshire police worked with 4 different authorities who all had slightly different processes and priorities but there was good co-operation and good structures across the police forces and partner organisations.

Work was going to be undertaken, through the remedy project to improve communication and to ensure that there was a consistent approach in the actions taken when communicating with victims/survivors.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People noted that the Trauma Resilience Service and the co-ordination of providers for post abuse support are all engaging survivors voice to capture this but want to get better and for the survivors' voice to feed into the next round of commissioning to ensure that services being provided are those that are needed.

Missing Advocates are part of the EVOLVE team and carry out the initial return interviews to ascertain what interventions are needed. As this service is separate from the police there is more likely to be engagement and trust from the young people.

It was clarified that there are two dedicated Missing Advocates within the EVOLVE team who work only with the children who were reported missing. All children who were reported missed were offered a return home interview within 72 hours. They identify the route causes for missing episodes and offer ongoing support and help to create a 'Find Me' plan of key information.

Regarding the KPI's assigned to the three service providers, it was clarified that there were a number of them, and they centred around the number of survivors and victims that were worked with and around the timeliness of the first contact with them and how many sessions they would be offered as part of the provision. Further information can be supplied to the Commission after the meeting.

It was queried if consideration could be given to members as to how information could be relayed regarding potential child exploitation hotspots within their wards to raise awareness. It was clarified that a lot of data was gathered however care needed to be taken when looking at what data could be provided to members to ensure that no child could be identified. It was also confirmed that the information held was the child's address and may not be where the exploitation took place.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said she would send a link to the LGA 'Must Know: Online harms' document be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.

In response it was clarified that South Yorkshire Police did take a proactive approach to tackling this and more training and information was available now along with stronger partnership working.

The CCG and other partners were very engaged with providing lifelong support to victims/survivors as needed across the region.

It was felt that PCSO's and Housing Officers would benefit from receiving more in-depth Child Exploitation training rather than receiving an online session. In response it was clarified that a panel had been set up following receipt of funding to design, implement and deliver an in-depth child exploitation training programme. The heart of the training programme would be centred around the survivor's experience.

It was confirmed that there was a greater understanding across the service to support the criminally exploited children. There was no longer a child sexual exploitation team, it was a combined child exploitation team that supported all aspects. This took place within the EVOLVE team.

In response it was confirmed that there was no limit to how often the therapy could be accessed, and it could be accessed in multiple ways with no cut off point. The services were commissioned and staffed to meet the needs of the demand.

The support from the transport network is key. There were good links with the bus companies and ongoing training was provided to staff regarding safeguarding and assisting to find missing children.

A performance framework was monitored through the Child Exploitation Delivery Group.

The Commission received positive feedback from a Councillor who had attended the Child Matters training. Many of the partner organisations had also attended the course which was a full day in length. It has highlighted that the next Child Matters training would focus on child sexual exploitation.

Members indicated that they felt reassured by the wealth of information provided through the report and during discussions.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That details of the key performance indicators assigned to the Post CSE Contract providers be shared with the commission.
3. That consideration be given as to how information can be relayed to elected Members regarding potential child exploitation hotspots within their wards.
4. That further information would be provided to the Improving Lives Select Commission should the number of prosecutions associated with child exploitation increase.
5. That a site visit to the Evolve Service be arranged for members of the Improving Lives Select Commission to create a greater understanding of its operation.
6. That a link to the LGA 'Must Know: Online harms' document be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.
7. That members of the Improving Lives Select Commission be notified once the date for Safeguarding Awareness Week has been announced.
8. That further information regarding the project to develop an in-depth child exploitation training programme be provided to the Improving Lives Select Commission when available.
9. To provide clarification if the Child Matters 2 training course which focuses on CSE could be attended by members of the Improving Lives Selection Commission.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair explained that the Work Programme was still in development and would be drafted and circulated for consideration.

9. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - SUB AND PROJECT GROUP UPDATES

The Chair provided a progress report on sub and project group activity. Specifically detailing the Early Help Review, for which information had been sourced but had not yet been collated. She explained that 10 different authorities had been contacted for information.

The Chair also explained a review would be conducted to consider Exploitation. A small sub-group would be created to scope its requirements and discuss how the outcomes can feedback into the Improving Lives Select Commission. This review would commence upon the conclusion of the Early Help Review.

Resolved:-

1. That the update be noted.

10. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

11. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**Resolved:-**

1. That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Tuesday, 26 July 2022, commencing at 10am at Rotherham Town Hall.